



IRAQ Status Report

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Iraq Policy & Operations Group

A BIWEEKLY REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ

UNCLASSIFIED

APRIL 28, 2011

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Politics and Diplomacy

Boehner Leads Congressional Delegation to Iraq: House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) led a congressional delegation to Iraq on April 16. The group met with Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and senior U.S. military officials. Travelling with the Speaker were Mac Thornberry (R-TX), Mike Conaway (R-TX), Tom Rooney (R-FL), Joe Heck (R-NV) and Dan Boren (D-OK). The Members met with Maliki to discuss the future of bilateral relations between the two countries as the remaining U.S. troops prepare for withdrawal. The Prime Minister stressed the importance of trade and defense cooperation, as well as maintaining future training partnerships. Maliki welcomed Boehner's comments that the U.S. remained committed to supporting the political process and Iraq's development. "Our first priority must be ensuring that the remaining 46,000 U.S. forces and their civilian counterparts that are working with the Government of Iraq and advising and assisting the Iraqi Security Forces have the resources and support they need to complete their mission," Boehner said in a statement. "We must protect the economic, political, and security progress that has been made." ([Reuters](#), NEA-I-IPOG)

Arab League Summit Postponed: After an initial delay that pushed from March to May the Arab League Summit slated to be held in Baghdad, the meeting of Arab heads of state has been postponed once more. Foreign Ministers from the Arab countries will now meet on May 15 to consider a new date for the high-level meeting. Holding the Summit in Baghdad is seen by Iraqi leaders as a sign of Iraq's re-integration into the region, and Iraqi officials have noted the delay is not related to the security situation in Iraq, and that Baghdad remains ready to host the Summit. The last Summit held in Baghdad took place in 1990. (NEA-I-IPOG)

Economic Activity

ExxonMobil Grants Basrah University \$1 million: American corporation ExxonMobil is giving \$1 million (1.2 billion Iraqi dinar) to the University of Basrah to benefit students who intend to pursue careers in the oil and gas industry. The money will go towards the construction of petroleum and engineering laboratories on the campus, as well as funding for faculty and curriculum development. “A highly skilled technical workforce is crucial to the country’s future success. In parallel, the ability of the university to further develop its faculty for a growing student body is the key to preparing the next generation of innovators,” said James Adams, ExxonMobil Iraq Vice President. It is expected that 46,000 students will pursue oil and gas studies through the University’s Department of Petroleum Engineering over the next 20 years; the Department was founded in 2008 to meet the needs of Basrah’s growing energy sector. (NEA-I-IPOG; [Aswat Al-Iraq](#))

Iraq Postpones Fourth Bid Round to January 2012: Iraqi Minister of Oil Abdul Karim al-Luaiby announced April 25 that Iraq’s fourth oil and gas bid round, which will include 12 exploration blocks, will be held in January 2012, rather than November 2011 as previously announced. Luaiby noted that the Ministry expects seven of the twelve blocks to contain primarily natural gas. The Ministry will announce pre-qualified companies in June, provide information on the blocks to pre-qualified companies in August, and issue a tender protocol and model contract in December, according to the Minister. (NEA-I-IPOG; [Wall Street Journal](#))

U.S.-Iraqi Cooperation

Large Scale Live Fire Exercise Demonstrates Iraqi Security Forces’ Expanded Capabilities: Iraqi Army, Iraqi Special Forces, and Iraqi Air Force elements were the main participants in an all encompassing live fire exercise that began on April 18. Operation Lion’s Leap was the result of several months of training facilitated by U.S. Forces in Iraq (USF-I). USF-I also worked closely with the Ministry of Defense to coordinate the exercise, which is one of several similar exercises planned that will both improve and demonstrate the combat proficiency of Iraq’s military and its ability to take full responsibility for Iraq’s security once Operation New Dawn draws to a close at the end of 2011. ([USF-I](#), NEA-I-IPOG)

Partnering to Protect Iraq’s Cultural Heritage: The University of Delaware (UD), the Winterthur Museum in Delaware, and the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore have received a U.S. government grant to collaborate with the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage to educate Iraqi museum workers on methods to restore and maintain cultural artifacts. Under the grant program, Iraqi professionals are taking courses taught by UD academics at the Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage, the eminent cultural and historical preservation center in Iraq. Through the program, Iraqi museum workers take four-to-six month courses in conservation, scientific methods for preservation, risk management, and archeology, after which they receive a UD certificate of study.

These classes, and the work of the Institute in general, are focused on changing the emphasis of Iraqi museums from acting as “storehouses” for artifacts to serving as centers of education that conduct outreach programs for visitors. This shift will help bring Iraqi museum professionals in closer contact with their international counterparts and broaden their professional networks – an important progression after years of war and sanctions. Already, 34 professionals have undertaken the program and 22 have undertaken a modified version of the program.

The goal of the UD, Winterthur, and Walter Museums partnership is to give the Iraqi museum workers and the Iraqi Institute Director a skills foundation upon which to operate museums and maintain cultural sites independently once the program ends. To assist them, the partnership is creating a U.S.-Iraq Advisory Council, composed of academics, lecturers, and museum professionals that will counsel the Iraqi Institute and the State Board for Antiquities and Heritage beyond the life of the program. The grant is being administered by the U.S. Department of State.

Debra Hess Norris, chair of UD’s Department of Art Conservation, called the program “a superb example of Iraqis and Americans working together in a very positive, productive, and powerful way.” The program aligns with Section IV of the Strategic Framework Agreement between Iraq and the United States, which governs cultural cooperation. This includes engagement in the areas of culture, education, science, and youth programs.* (NEA-I-IPOG; [Udaily](#))

Case Tracking Application Installed at Provincial Courthouses to Increase Efficiency and Transparency: The High Judicial Council (HJC) of Iraq, with support from the USG, has developed an Iraqi-designed, Oracle-based Case Tracking Application (CTA) to increase automation in the Iraqi criminal justice system. The CTA basic software program manages criminal case information (i.e., name of defendant, address, complaint, criminal charges, defense attorney, next court date, etc.). After the installation and trial run of the case tracking application at the HJC, the HJC and numerous USG entities, including the PRTs, began coordination to increase automation of the Iraqi Criminal Judicial System in courthouses throughout Iraq. The HJC identified one appellate court in each province to receive computer and network equipment and installation from the USG. In return, the HJC committed to provide the CTA software, install the software in each courthouse, and train a select number of users at each location on the software. After completing pre-assessments at their designated courthouses, the PRTs submitted and received approval for individual QRF grant applications. The delivery and installation of the equipment nationwide will be completed in June, with the HJC software installation and training to immediately follow. The CTA is scheduled to be online in the appellate courts in July. This information technology solution will allow Iraqi courthouses to interact with each other as they effectively track cases and defendants throughout the Iraqi criminal justice system. Better case tracking increases case processing speed and provides both greater transparency to the Iraqi Judicial System and a more rapid, efficient administration of justice and the rule of law. (NEA-I-PRT/T; NEA-I-ECON/ASSIST).

* Full text of the SFA is available at: http://fhp.osd.mil/intlhealth/pdfs/strategic_framework_agreement.pdf

Provincial Highlights

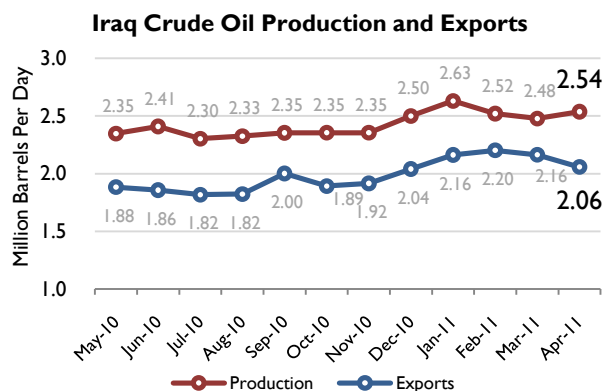
Illiteracy Main Obstacle for Women’s Progress in DhiQar, South Iraq: Members of civil society organizations in Dhi Qar are speaking out against the detrimental impact of widespread female illiteracy. “Illiteracy represents the main obstacle for the development of women’s activity in the province,” said women’s activist Shatha al-Qaisy. She correlated illiteracy with the inability of women to change their roles within Iraqi society and reach their personal ambitions, and noted there are an inadequate number of reading centers and other forms of support to help women in rural and tribal areas. Razzaq Obeid, director of the human rights group Tammuz, argued that the problem of illiteracy could be eradicated if more attention and resources are devoted to the two million women of Dhi Qar, or 34 percent of the female population, who are not literate. He also cited the example of Dhi Qar’s sole female protestor in recent demonstrations, activist Shazha al-Qaysi, as proof that women are not adequately integrated into Dhi Qar’s political dialogue, partly due to the high rate of illiteracy among women. 60,000 dedicated employees staff Dhi Qar’s Education Directorate, and the province has 195 primary schools for girls and 636 co-ed schools. Improving these schools and providing more resources for adult learners can help Dhi Qar to integrate a crucial segment of its population – women – into its commercial and political arenas to the benefit of the Province and Iraq as a whole. ([NEA-I-IPOG](#); Aswat Al-Iraq)

Reopening of The Babil Arts and Culture Center Features Crowd-Pleasing Political Satire: The Babil Arts and Culture Center reopened on April 16 after a series of renovations financed by PRT Babil. Following a ceremony to commemorate the reopening, a troupe of Babil actors performed a political satire written by a Babil artist. The significance of this evening goes beyond a night of entertainment for the academics, students, adults, and children in the audience. It signals the initial stages of the rebirth of Babil as a cultural center in Iraq, a role that the province has played throughout Iraq’s history. The performance also represents a triumph for free speech and expression, as the play openly criticized regional politics through humor and metaphor. PRT Babil is hopeful that the reopening of the Babil Arts and Culture Center will inspire other artistic endeavors and infrastructural restorations that bolster the local economy and make richer the lives of Iraqis. (NEA-I-IPOG; U.S. Embassy in Baghdad – PRT Babil)

Current Economic Indicators

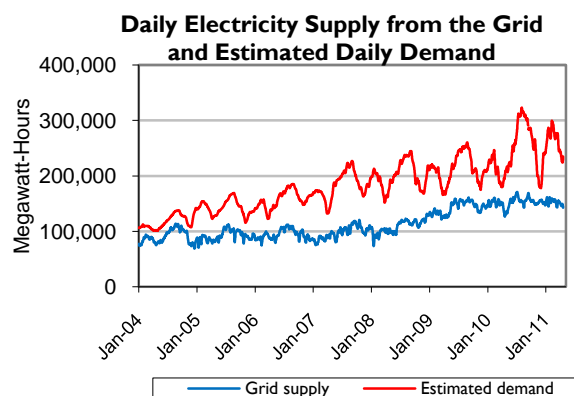
Crude Oil Average Closing Prices (April 11 – April 22)

Basrah Light \$118.29/bbl || Dated Brent \$122.83/bbl || WTI Cushing \$108.76/bbl || Oman/Dubai \$115.87/bbl



2010 Oil Revenue: \$51.4 Billion (est)

2011 Oil Revenue: \$22 Billion (est)



Supply of electricity from the grid April 13-19 was 14% above 2010 and met 61% of estimated demand compared with 65% for the year-earlier period.

Source: Department of State, NEA/I Economics Section, NEA-I-ECON-DL@state.gov

Other Headlines

New Iraqi Air Operations Center Opens ([USF-I](#), April 23)

Iraq Oil Exports Bring in Record Income ([AFP](#), April 25)

Iraq Cabinet Okays \$37 Billion for Infrastructure ([AFP](#), April 26)

For additional information, please see:

- **Department of State, Iraq Status Reports**
<http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/c28010.htm>
- **Department of State, Section 1227 Report on Iraq**
<http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/>
- **Department of Defense, Section 9010 Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq**
http://www.defenselink.mil/home/features/Iraq_Reports/index.html
- **Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook**
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

Please forward all questions and/or comments to:
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